Liberty of Conſcience ASSERTED,

And SEVERAL

REASONS RENDRED,

Why no Outward Force, nor Impoſition, ought to be uſed in Matters of *Faith* and *Religion*:

With ſeveral SAYINGS, Collected from the Speeches and Writings of KING *JAMES*, And KING *CHARLES* the Firſt.

John Crook, *Samuel Fiſher*, *Francis Howgill*, *Richard Hubberthorne*.

Acts 5. 38, 39.

Now I ſay unto you, Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone: for if this Counſel, or this Work, be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it; leſt haply ye be found fighters againſt God.

This was delivered into the hands of the Members of both Houſes of *Parliament*, the laſt day of the Third Month, 1661.

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And SEVERAL
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Speeches and Writings of KING JAMES,
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John Crook, } Printers Hereof.
Samuel Pryce, } Richard Hudderesfield.

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to fight against God.

This was delivered into the Hands of the Members of both Houses
of Parliament, the last day of the Third Month, 1689.

Liberty of Conſcience Aſſerted, &c.

LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE ought to be allowed in the dayes of the *Goſpel* in the free Exerciſe of it to *God-ward* (without Compulſion) in all things relating to His Worſhip, for theſe Reaſons following.

1. Becauſe the *General* and *Univerſal* Royal *Law* of *Chriſt* Commands it *Matth.7. 12. All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: for this is the Law and Prophets.* That which every man would have and receive from another, he ought by Chriſt's Rule to give and allow it to another. But every man is willing to have the *Liberty* of his *own Conſcience*, Therefore ought to *allow it* to another.

2. Becauſe, *No man* can *perſwade* the *Conſcience* of *another*, either what *God is*, or how he ſhould *be worſhipped*, but by the Spirit, which God hath given to inſtruct man in the wayes of Truth.

3. Becauſe, *All Obedience* or *Service* that is obtained *by force*, is for fear of *Wrath*, and not from *Love*, nor for *Conſcience ſake*; and therefore will but continue ſo long as that *fear* or *force* abides upon them.

4. Becauſe, That *by forcing*, No man can make a *Hypocrite* to be *a true Believer*; but on the contrary, many may be made *Hypocrites*.

5. Becauſe, That in all *forced Impoſitions* upon *mens Conſciences* there is ſomething of the *Wrath* of man *exerciſed*, which works not the *Righteouſneſs of God*, but rather begets *Enmity* in the heart *one* towards *another*.

6. Becauſe, that by *forcing* any thing upon *mens Conſciences*, as to matters of *Faith* and *Worſhip*, many are *hardened* in their *hearts* againſt the *things impoſed*; when as otherwiſe, through *Love* and *gentle Inſtructions* their hearts might be *perſwaded* to *willing Obedience*.

7. Becauſe, That *Perſecution* for *Conſcience* contradicteth *Chriſt's Charge*, Matth. 13. who bids, that *the Tares* (or *falſe worſhippers*) be *ſuffered* to *grow together* in the *Field* (or *World*) till the *Harveſt* (or End of the World.)

8. Becauſe, *Force* is contrary to the End for which it is *pretended* to be uſed (*viz.*) *the preſervation and ſafety of the Wheat*, which *End* is not *anſwered* by *Perſecution*, becauſe the *Wheat* is in danger to be *plucked up* thereby, as Chriſt ſaith,

9. Becauſe, *to force*, is inconſiſtent with the *Belief* of the *Jews Converſion* (and other *falſe worſhippers*) which is prayed for by the *Publick Teachers*, and cannot be attained, if *Perſecution* for *Conſcience* be *proſecuted*.

10. Becauſe, they that *impoſe* upon *mens Conſciences*, exerciſe *Dominion* over *mens Faith*, which the Apoſtles denyed, ſaying, *they had not Dominion over any mens Faith*.

11. Becauſe, *Impoſition* upon *mens Conſciences* neceſſitates them *to ſin*, in yeelding a *Conformity* contrary to their own faith: *for whatſoever is not of a mans own faith, is ſin*.

12. Becauſe, that *Impoſition* and *force* wreſtles with *fleſh* and *blood*, and *Carnal weapons*, which is contrary to the Apoſtles Doctrine, who ſaid, *Our Weapons are not Carnal, but Spiritual, and mighty through God*: and *we wreſtle not with fleſh and bloud*.

13. Becauſe, there is but one Judge, Law-giver and King in and over the *Conſcience*, as the Saints have teſtified in the Scriptures of Truth; and whoſoever would *intrude*, ſo as to be *Judge* and *Law-giver* over the Conſcience, *intrencheth* upon the *Prerogative* of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 33. 22. *James* 4. 12.

14. Becauſe, it is propheſied in *Iſa.* 11. *The Wolf ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lye down with the Kid, and there ſhall be no Deſtroyer in all he Holy Mountain*; and therefore no *Impoſition* upon mens Conſciences.

15. Becauſe, to *impoſe* upon *mens Conſciences* for *differences* in *Faith*, is contrary to the *Advice* of the *Apoſtle*, who directs People *to wait upon God to be ſatisfied*, and not to the *Magiſtrate* or *Others*, to be *forced*; who ſaith, *Whereunto we have attained, let us walk*; and *wherein any man is otherwiſe-minded, God ſhall reveal, even that unto him*.

16. Becauſe,

16. Because, *To force* mens *Consciences*, and to lay *Yoaks* upon them, is to *make void* the *Blood-shed* and *Sufferings* of Christ, who sits upon the *Throne* of the *Conscience*, and gives *liberty* there; and commands us to *stand fast in that Liberty*, and *not to be entangled through the Impositions of men*, or *Yoak of Bondage*, Gal. 5. 6.

17. Because in *all Nations* the *different Professions* and *Perswasions* of *Religion*, are either *Friends* or *Enemies* to the *Governours*: If *Friends* then *obliged* by that *Bond*. If *Enemies* then *Christ's Command* is to take place, who saith, *Love your Enemies*; which if observed, *Persecution* for *Conscience* will be avoided.

18. Because, *Toleration* of *different Perswasions* in *Religion* was *allowed* in the *Jewish State*, as not *Inconsistent* with *their Safety*, and that in *things* contrary *each* to *other*, as the *Sadduces*, *Pharisees*, *Essean*s, *Herodians* with *Others*.

19. Because, the *True Religion* cannot be *Preached* up by *force* of *Armies*, and the *Primitive Christians* detested that Form of *Proceedings*.

20. Because, No man hath *such Power* over the *Souls* and *Consciences* of other men, as to lay a *Necessity* on them *to Believe* that which they do *not Believe*, or not *to Believe* what they *do Believe*: True Faith being the Gift of God.

21. Because, If the *Magistrate Imposeth* upon the *Conscience*, he must either do it as a *Magistrate*, or as a *Christian*. Not as a *Magistrate*, for then *Heathens* (being *Magistrates*) have the *same Power* to *Impose*; and so, by *Revolutions* and *Conquests*, may come to *give Laws* to *Christians*, and *Compel* them *to Idolatry*. 2. Not as *Christians*, for that *Contradicts* Christ's saying, *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them*; *but it shall not be so among you, for all ye are, Brethren*.

22. Because, By the *same Rule* and *Reason* that the *Magistrate* of *one Nation* ought to *Impose* upon, and *Persecute* for *Conscience*, the *Magistrates* in *all* other *Nations* ought to do the *same*; and so the *greatest part* of *Mankind* may come to be *Destroyed*, there being more that *Dissent*, than are at *Unity* in Matters of *Faith* and *Religion*.

23. Because, The *Strength* of *Truth*, and its *Conquest* over *Falsity* and *Deceit*, is best *Discovered* by letting *both* have *their*

Liberty,

Liberty, Profit, outward Commission; For no doubt had *outward Force* been *refused*, the *prevalency* of *Truth* had been *more manifest*, and that wise saying, truly experienced in the World, *Viz. That which is of God will stand, and that which is not will come to nothing.*

24. Because, The *Disciples* of *Christ* are rebuked by him for *desiring* the *Destruction* of *those* that were *contrary* to *Him*, and would not *receive Him*: which Zeal is sharply reproved in His saying, *They knew not what Spirit they were of.*

25. Because, To *Impose* upon *mens Consciences*, and to *Destroy* their *Persons* for *Difference* in *Religion*, is *Contrary* to the *End* of *Christ's Coming*, who saith, *He came not to* Destroy *mens* Lives, *but to* save *them.*

26. Because, *People* of *divers Religions* in one Nation, *if not tolerated*, must some of them be *destroyed*, or *removed* by *Banishment*. If *destroyed*, the *Constancy* and *Patience* of the *Sufferers* for their *Faith*, moving *Pity* and *Commiseration*, makes men *more ready to own*, than to *reject* their *Faith*, and so rather *Multiplies*, than *lessens*, the *number* of its *Professors*. If *Banish'd*, this renders the *Banished* as so many *Enemies abroad*, ready upon *all occasions* to *disturbe* the *Peace* and *Tranquillity* of their *own native Countrey*. There is therefore, in order to the outward *welfare* of all *Nations*, a kind of *Necessity* for a *Toleration* in them of all *Religions.*

27. Because, To *Impose* upon *mens Consciences* begets a *hatred* against the *Imposers* in those who are *Imposed upon*, and *forc'd* thereby to *violate* their *Consciences* towards God in matters of Worship.

28. Because, Men are *Commanded* to be *subject* to the Powers that are, for *Conscince sake*, and therefore such Powers ought not to *Persecute* men for *Conscience sake*, being that is prescribed for the rule of Obedience; The Scripture saying, *Be ye subject not onely for wrath, but for Conscience sake.*

29. We find it Asserted by King *James* in his speech to the *Parliament* in the Year, 1609. who said, *That it is a pure rule in Divinity, That God never loves to plant his Church with* Violence *and* Blood; and furthermore said, *It was usually the condition of Christians to be* Persecuted, *but not to* Persecute.

30. And

(upon which we find the same thing in substance asserted again, by his Son Charles the first, in his Book known by the Name of EIKON BASILIKE, Printed for R. Royston, as followeth.

Pag. 167. In his Prayer to God, he said, *Thou seest how much Cruelty amongst Christians is acted under the colour of Religion; as if we could not be Christians, unless we Crucifie one another.*

Pag. 168. *Make them at length seriously to consider, that nothing* Violent *and* Injurious, *can be Religious.*

Pag. 170. *Nor is it so proper to hew our Religious Reformations by the* Sword, *as to polish them by* fair *and* equal Disputations, *among those that are most concerned in the Differences, whom, not Force, but Reason ought to convince.*

Sure in matters of Religion, those Truths gain most upon mens Judgements and Consciences, which are least urged with Secular Violence, *which weakens Truth with Prejudices.*

Pag. 115. *It being an Office not onely of Humanity, rather to use* Reason *than* Force, *but also of Christianity to seek* Peace *and* ensue *it.*

Pag. 91, 92. *In point of true Conscientious* tenderness, *I have often Declared, how little I desire my Laws and Scepter, should intrench on* God's Soveraignty, *which is the* onely King *of mens* Consciences.

Pag. 123. *Nor do I desire any man should be farther subject unto me, than all of us may be subject unto God.*

Concerning Oaths.

P. 76. *The Injoyning of* Oathes, *upon People, must needs in things doubtful* be Dangerous, *as in things unlawful* Damnable.

Some words of Advice from CHARLES the First, to the then Prince of *Wales*, now King of *England*, &c.

Pag. 165. *My Counsel and Charge to you is, That you seriously consider the former Real or Objected Miscariages, which might occasion my Troubles, that you may avoid them,* &c.

Beware of Exasperating *any Factions, by the* Crosness *and* Asperity *of some mens* Passions, Humors, *and* private Opinions,

Imployed

Imployed by you, grounded onely upon differences in lesser matters, which are but the Skirts and Suburbs of Religion, wherein a Charitable **Connivance**, *and Christian* **Toleration**, *often Dissipates their strength, when rougher Opposition Fortifies, and puts the despised and oppressed party into such Combinations, as may most enable them to get a full Revenge on those they count their Persecuters.*

Pag. 166. *Take heed that outward Circumstances and Formalities of Religion Devour not all.*

Pag. 164. *Your Prerogative is best shewed and exercised in* **Remitting**, *rather than* **Exacting** *the Rigor of the Laws, there being nothing worse than* **Legal Tyranny.**

Acts 5. 33, 34, 35. Gamaliel *said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed unto your selves, what ye intend to do as touching these men, &c.*

Acts 18. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Gallio *said, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness; Reason would that I should bear with you: But if it be a question of words and names, and of your Law, look ye to it: for I will be no Judge of such matters.*